



Counselling Services

IVF treatment is frequently referred to as an emotional roller-coaster as hope fluctuates up and down from the moment you begin fertility investigations. With infertility, the lack of control is difficult: counselling provides a place where you can air your concerns and frustrations in a non-judgemental arena. The result is invariably a better understanding of your situation with a chance of developing new ways of coping and different ways of exerting some control in your life. Naturally, the prospect of childlessness, together with the strain of investigations and treatment is a recipe for tension, anxiety and conflict. As a result, relationships are often put under pressure. Counselling can help you to sort through the anxieties and fears you may have, and ease some of the tension and conflict that you may be experiencing. If you attend with a partner, it can help you understand each other's point of view and the process often kick-starts a different conversation between you.

Counselling is not just a remedy for when things go wrong, it is a facility that can help to ensure that things go right. You don't have to be having problems to see the counsellor. It can provide support, clarity of thought, and help you to feel less isolated. At this stressful time, you and your partner may be called upon to make momentous decisions that could affect both the rest of your lives and the life of the hoped-for child, counselling provides a calm space to talk decisions through. Staff at the clinic are aware of how stressful coping with treatment can be and would encourage you to seek support at any point before, during, or after treatment. Recognising you need help to cope is a sign of strength, acknowledging that, then making an appointment can be a relief and have a positive effect before you even get to see the counsellor!

If you are to receive donated sperm or eggs, counselling is mandatory. Your treatment will not start until you have had this opportunity to discuss the choices you may be offered and their implications.

The counsellor will keep brief notes of sessions, the purpose of which is as an aide memoire of IVF treatment, themes of discussion and the implications considered regarding the use of

donor gametes. A copy of the referral form and process notes are kept separate and filed securely offsite and accessed only by the counsellor.

All the counsellors we refer to are BICA registered and are registered with the Information Commissioner's Office. All counsellors follow and comply with strict guidance set out by the clinic, the British Infertility Counselling Association (BICA) our regulator the HFEA and The Data Protection act.

The counselling services are separate entities to Hull and East Riding Fertility and as such the information you discuss with the counsellor remains confidential within the counselling service. However, if the counsellor is given information which suggests you, someone else, or a potential child is in danger of serious harm then, after giving the matter careful consideration, the counsellor may take steps to minimise the danger. This may mean breaking confidentiality and speaking to the relevant authorities, which may include the clinic; if possible, any action would usually be discussed with you first. There are also times when the counsellor may be required by a court of law to break confidentiality, e.g., terrorism, drug trafficking, money laundering or via a court order for disclosure.

Our counselling service is available to you before, during and after treatment. Couples usually have an appointment together, but you can be seen separately if you wish. Counselling appointments can be made by calling us on 01482 689040 during normal working hours. Alternatively, please feel free to speak with a member of the team whilst you are at the clinic.

Counselling appointments are routinely available to book throughout the working week. In certain circumstances, after liaising with the counsellor; appointments can be made for alternative days and times.

If you are an NHS funded patient or pay for your treatment directly to the clinic, up to 3 support counselling sessions are included within your treatment package. If you have arranged a treatment package through Access Fertility, require additional support sessions or need implications counselling, there will be a charge for each session you have.

If you wish to access the clinics counselling service, please telephone 01482 689040 to speak to a member of our experienced office team who can discuss the process and any associated costs with you.